

U.S. Agency Funds Climate Change Projects in Nine Nations

By CHERYL PELLERIN

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency is spending \$2 million in nine countries to fund climate-change projects that enhance the capture and use of methane, which accounts for about one-sixth of powerful greenhouse gases.

The funds—to projects in India, China, Russia, Argentina, Brazil, the Republic of Korea, Mexico, Nigeria and Ukraine—are from the Methane to Markets Partnership, which the United States and 13 other countries launched in 2004.

The European Commission joined the group in September 2007, swelling the number of partners to 21. Together with more than 600 participating public and private organizations, the partners work on nearly 100 projects and activities around the world.

Paul Gunning, branch chief in the Climate Change Division at the Environmental Protection Agency, says the European Commission membership “is a good development because it brings additional expertise into the partnership and additional commitment that will help us grow the partnership and continue to achieve reductions in greenhouse gases globally.”

A little more than half of methane emissions come from people-generated sources. Methane concentrations in the atmosphere have more than doubled over 200 years, largely because of human activity. Methane is 23 times as effective as carbon dioxide in trapping heat in the atmosphere.

The Methane to Markets program targets four major causes of the emissions: coal mining, landfills, agriculture (animal-waste management), and oil and natural gas systems.

Of several projects being funded in India, one will help the Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry coordinate activities for advancing Indian methane recovery and use projects in the agriculture and landfill sectors, and another will help the International Institute for Energy Conservation in India initiate a nationwide system for recovering methane from manure at animal feeding operations.

Gunning says the European Commission has expressed interest in partnership activities that deal with capturing methane from coal mines and from oil and natural gas systems. The Commission sent a delegation to the Methane to Markets Exposition in Beijing in 2007 to learn more about the partnership.

The Commission is the first multi-country entity to join Methane to Markets. Four member countries (Germany, Italy, Poland and the United Kingdom) are already involved. In the coal sector, the Commission will be able to provide more than 50 years of European Union experience in targeting methane emissions from coal mines.

Methane is not only a greenhouse gas, it also is the main component of natural gas and a clean-burning energy source. The projects funded by the Environmental Protection Agency support a range of activities that help

A team from the Uttarakhand-based Wadia Institute of Himalayan Geology studies the movement of the Chorabari Glacier in Garhwal Himalaya.

remove technical and other barriers to methane capture and use.

With the grants, the agency is supporting a suite of activities that include training, database development on potential project sites, feasibility studies, technology transfer and project expositions.

“One of the more important areas is direct project assistance,” Gunning says. “So, for example, in Mexico we’ll be working with the Border Environment Cooperation Commission to undertake two feasibility studies [on gas recovery and use] in two cities.

“Our expectation is that the reports that are developed and issued from those studies will serve as a catalyst for private-sector investment to undertake a full-scale project,” Gunning says.

In Nigeria, the Center for People & the Environment received a grant for a

For more information:

Methane to Markets Partnership

<http://www.epa.gov/methanetomarkets/>

International Solid Waste Management

<http://www.iswa.org/web/guest/home>

study of electricity generation from coal mine methane at a site to be determined, and the International Solid Waste Association will develop a Nigerian landfill inventory.

The Ecological Regional Center

A worker at the combined heat and power plant at New Belgium Brewing Co., in Fort Collins, Colorado. The plant collects methane gas generated in the brewing process and converts it into energy.

in Russia will develop a landfill inventory for that nation, and the Russia Energy Efficiency Demonstration Zones Association will create a Clean Energy Technology Information Center in Moscow.

In South Korea, the Korea District Heating Corporation will conduct feasibility studies of methane recovery from the Chuncheon, Gangneung, Jinju and Mokpo landfills.

“Virtually all the projects are leveraging other resources,” Gunning says. “So in all cases, the institutions we are cooperating with will contribute funding for projects, and in some cases have partnered with others, too. So the award amounts aren’t necessarily the full amount—it’s a portion supported by the U.S. government.”

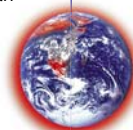
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